

Health and Safety Programs

OHS information for workers, employers, and prime contractors

After June 1, 2018 employers who have 20 or more workers will be required to implement an occupational health and safety program (OHS program).

For more information on when an OHS program is required, see [“Do I need an OHS program?”](#)

This resource provides an overview of what employers need to put in place when they are required to have a health and safety program.

What are OHS programs?

In the *Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act* “health and safety program” means a coordinated system of procedures, processes and other measures implemented by an organization to promote continuous improvement in occupational health and safety.



The objective of an OHS program is to integrate OHS into employer practices. An OHS program is a tool which promotes health and safety and minimizes the risk of injury and illness.

OHS programs, along with joint work site health and safety committees (HSCs) or health and safety representatives, form a part of the internal responsibility system. This encourages work site parties to be aware of their roles and responsibilities in the workplace. OHS programs are developed in consultation with the HSC, if there is one.

What is required for an OHS program?

1. A health and safety policy

A health and safety policy is an important part of managing health and safety in the workplace and an important step in demonstrating management commitment. A health and safety policy must state the policy for protection and maintenance of the health and safety of workers at the work site. This is often combined with the statement of OHS responsibilities (#4).

As a best practice, a health and safety policy may also include:

- the employer’s commitment to health and safety, and
- the goals and objectives for health and safety.

For a sample policy, see the templates and samples section.



2. Hazard assessment

A hazard assessment identifies existing and potential hazards to workers at the work site, including harassment, violence, physical, biological, chemical or radiological hazards and measures that will be taken to eliminate, reduce or control those hazards.

More information and templates available in *Hazard Assessment and Control: a handbook for Alberta employers and workers* (BP-018).



3. Emergency response plan (ERP)

An ERP identifies what people, resources and procedures are needed to deal with emergencies. The plan must meet the requirements in the OHS Code Part 7 which includes:

- the identification of potential emergencies,
- procedures for dealing with the identified emergencies,
- the identification of, location of and operational procedures for emergency equipment,
- the emergency response training requirements,
- the location and use of emergency facilities,
- the fire protection requirements,
- the alarm and emergency communication requirements,
- the first aid services required,
- procedures for rescue and evacuation, and
- the designated rescue and evacuation workers.



A sample ERP is in the templates and samples section.

4. Statement of OHS responsibilities of the employer, supervisors, and workers at the work site

Employers, supervisors, and workers are all legally responsible for safety and health in the workplace. Creating a statement of responsibilities ensures that each party knows what they are responsible for. The statement of OHS responsibilities is often included in the health and safety policy.

5. Work site inspection schedule and procedures

The employer must schedule regular inspections of the workplace and work processes. Inspection intervals should be based on factors such as the type of work site, the work performed, the hazards encountered, size of the work site, and the number of workers. By examining the workplace, inspections help to identify and record hazards for corrective action.



OHS Code Part 13: For work sites with an HSC, inspections must be done at least once before each quarterly meeting required by section 27(1) of the Act in order to identify health and safety hazards that have not been controlled.



For more information on inspections, see the CCOHS Effective Workplace Inspections fact sheet.

6. Procedures to follow when another employer or self-employed person is working at the work site

It is the responsibility of the prime contractor, if there is one, to coordinate the health and safety programs of multiple employers or self-employed persons. Prime contractors are required in construction, oil and gas work sites or any other projects designated by an OHS director. In the absence of a prime contractor, works sites with multiple employers and/or self-employed persons should work together to coordinate their health and safety responsibilities.

Coordinating health and safety for multiple work site parties

When many employers or self-employed persons are at a work site, there may be many OHS programs which need to be coordinated. Site-specific health and safety procedures should be established and communicated to all employers and self-employed persons at the work site. This will help to control hazards and ensure consistency.

Evaluation and selection criteria

Criteria for evaluating and selecting other employers and self-employed persons at the work site should be established.

Regular Monitoring

Procedures must include plans for regular monitoring of employers and self-employed persons at the work site. Regular monitoring may include inspections or any other activity which verifies that work site specific health and safety policies and the *OHS Act*, Regulations, and Code are being followed.



For additional considerations when establishing procedures for multiple employers, see the templates and samples section



In addition to protecting other employers or self-employed persons, employers have a general obligation under section to protect “other persons at or in the vicinity of the work site who may be affected by hazards originating from the work site.” *OHS Act 3(1)(a)(iii)*.

7. Health and safety orientation and training for workers and supervisors

New workers are three times more likely to be injured than experienced workers. A timely and comprehensive worker orientation is important to help prepare workers to perform their jobs safely. Section 3(2) of the OHS Act requires that a worker receive adequate training to protect their health and safety before they begin performing a work activity, use new equipment, perform a new process, or is moved to another area or work site.

The training ensures that workers can safely perform all assigned tasks. Training may need to be customized for each work site and job and should assess a worker’s competency at completion.

Supervisors need additional training on their specific responsibilities and the hazards experienced by their workers.



For sample Worker Orientation Record and Summary Records of Training templates, see the templates and samples section.

8. Procedures for investigating incidents, injuries, and refusals to work

Investigation procedures need to be in place so that everyone understands their responsibilities before an incident occurs. The investigation procedures should consider the following components:

- the objective of the investigation,
- who is responsible for the investigation,
- who participates in the investigation,
- type of training the investigators will receive,
- who receives written investigation reports,
- who follows up on corrective action,
- internal reporting procedures,
- procedures for reporting to OHS, and
- who maintains documents and records, etc.



For more information on incident investigations, see the CCOHS Incident Investigation fact sheet.

The program must also include a procedure for investigating work refusals. The OHS Act requires the employer to investigate work refusals if the concern is not immediately remedied. The investigation will take place in the presence of the worker and a member of the HSC, if it is reasonable to do so and it does not create a danger to health and safety. If the matter is not resolved after the employer investigation, an OHS officer may be contacted.



Serious injuries or incidents must be reported to OHS. The definition of serious injuries and incidents is outlined in the OHS Act s.40. Any incident that causes an injury or had the potential of causing serious injury to a person must also be reported to OHS.

Any injury that occurs at work must also be reported to the Workers' Compensation Board.

9. Procedures for worker participation in work site health and safety, including inspections and investigations

Worker involvement in efforts to prevent injuries and occupational illnesses is important. Workers must be familiar with the OHS program, know their rights and responsibilities, and understand how to handle concerns. The OHS program must include procedures for workers participation in inspections and investigations of incidents, injuries and work refusals. The OHS program should encourage workers to suggest ways to make the workplace safer and healthier, and know that their concerns/suggestions will be taken seriously without discriminatory action.



HSC and HS representatives are one way workers can participate in health and safety. For more information on HSCs and HS representatives, see:

- Joint worksite health and safety committees (LI036)
- Health and safety representatives (LI040)
- Do I need a committee or representative? (LI037)

10. Procedures for reviewing and revising the OHS program

Maintaining the program will ensure it continues to support health and safety. Developing a procedure to address how the OHS program will be reviewed and revised, when it will be done, and who will do it supports continued success.

The program must be reviewed every three years or more often if there is a change in circumstance at the work site that creates or could create hazards to workers. Examples of changes to consider include introduction of new technology or production methods, and discovery of new risks associated with existing conditions.

Contact Us

OHS Contact Centre

Throughout Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

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Edmonton & Surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Deaf or hearing impaired:

- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)

- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)

Website

work.alberta.ca/ohs-contact

Get Copies of *OHS Act*, Regulation and Code

Alberta Queen's Printer

qp.gov.ab.ca

Occupational Health and
Safety

work.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation

- Do I need a health and safety program? (LI036-1)
- [Hazard Assessment and Control: a handbook for Alberta employers and workers \(BP018\)](#)
- [CCOHS Effective Workplace Inspections fact sheet](#)
- [CCOHS Incident Investigation fact sheet](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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APPENDIX – Templates and samples

Health and Safety Policy (Sample)

Company Name: _____

Company Health and Safety Policy

This company is committed to a health and safety program that protects our workers, others (i.e. contractors) who enter onto our property, and the general public.

The employer, supervisors and workers at every level are responsible and accountable for the company's health and safety performance. Active participation by everyone, every day, in every job is necessary for the health and safety excellence that this company expects. Health and safety excellence includes the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, psychological, and social well-being of all employees. Our goal is a healthy, injury-free workplace for all workers. By working together we can achieve this goal.

The employer will:

- Ensure
 - the health, safety, and welfare of workers at the work site,
 - the health, safety and welfare of other persons at or near the work site who may be affected by hazards originating from the work site,
 - that workers are aware of their OHS rights and duties,
 - that workers are not subjected to or participate in harassment or violence at the work site,
 - that workers are supervised by a person who is competent and familiar with the OHS Act, Regulations, and Code,
 - they consult and cooperate with the HSC,
 - that health and safety concerns are resolved in a timely manner,
 - where a prime contractor is required, the prime contractor is advised of all the supervisors and workers names, and
 - that supervisors and workers are adequately trained for the protection of health and safety at the work site.

Supervisors will:

- Ensure
 - they are competent to supervise the workers under their supervision,
 - the workers under their supervision work in accordance with procedures and measures required by the OHS Act, Regulations, and Code,
 - the workers under their supervision use all hazard controls and properly uses or wears the personal protective equipment required by the employer or under the OHS Act, Regulation or Code, and
 - that workers are not subjected to or participate in harassment or violence at the work site.
- Take all precautions necessary to protect the health and safety of every worker under their supervision.
- Advise every worker under their supervision of all known or reasonably foreseeable hazards to health and safety in the area where the worker is performing work.
- Report concerns about an unsafe or harmful work site act or condition that occurs/exists or has occurred/existed to the employer.

APPENDIX – Templates and samples

Workers will:

- Protect the health and safety of themselves and other people at or near the worksite.
- Cooperate with their supervisors and employers to protect the health and safety of themselves and others.
- Use and wear devices and personal protective equipment required by the employer or the OHS Act, Regulation or Code.
- Refrain from causing or participating in harassment or violence.
- Report concerns about an unsafe or harmful work site act or condition that occurs/exists or has occurred/existed to the employer or supervisor.

In addition, employers, supervisors and workers will:

- Cooperate with any person exercising a duty imposed by the OHS Act, Regulations, or Code, and
- Comply with the OHS Act, Regulation, and Code and any site policies, procedures, and codes of practice.

Other workers (e.g. contractors, suppliers, or service providers) will comply with the OHS Act, Regulation and Code and site policies.

Workers at every level must be familiar with the requirements of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety legislation as it relates to their work.

Signed

Date

This form is for example purposes only. Completing this form alone will not necessarily put you in compliance with the legislation. It is important and necessary that you customize this document to meet the unique circumstances of your worksite. Further, it is essential that this document is not only completed, but is used, communicated, and implemented in accordance with the legislation. The Crown, its agents, employees or contractors will not be liable to you for any damages, direct or indirect, arising out of your use of this form.

APPENDIX – Templates and samples

Emergency Response Plan – Template (Sample)

Company:

Address or Location:

Completed by:

Date:

Potential Emergencies (Refer to your hazard assessment to determine which hazards could require rescue or evacuation)	The following are identified as potential emergencies:		
Emergency Procedures (Detail procedures to be followed for each identified emergency)	If an emergency (identified above) occurs, these steps need to be taken by the assigned personnel:		
Locations of Emergency Equipment	Emergency equipment is located at:		
	Fire Alarm:		
	Fire Extinguisher:		
	Fire Hose:		
	Panic Button:		
	Other:		
	Name:	Training Received:	Frequency:

APPENDIX – Templates and samples

Emergency Response Equipment Training & Requirements (List the names of workers trained to use each type of emergency equipment)			

APPENDIX – Templates and samples

Location and Use of Emergency Facilities	The nearest emergency services are located at:
	Fire Station:
	Ambulance:
	Police:
	Hospital:
	Other:
Fire Protection Requirements	Fire protection equipment listed below can be accessed by trained personnel at the following locations:
Alarm and Emergency Communication Requirements	
First Aid	First Aid Kit Type:
	Location:
	Other Supplies:
	First Aiders are:
	Work Station & Shift:
	Transportation Arrangements:
Procedures for Rescue and Evacuation	
Designated Rescue and Evacuation Workers	The following workers are trained in rescue and evacuation: (Name and area of expertise)

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APPENDIX – Templates and samples

Multiple employers or self-employed persons at the work site – Additional Considerations

Coordinating health and safety for multiple work site parties:

Examples of OHS program components that may require a coordinated, site-specific approach include:

- Hazard assessments
- Emergency response plans
- Inspection procedure and schedule
- Health and safety orientation and training for workers and supervisors
- Procedures for investigating incidents, injuries and refusals to work
- Others, depending on the work being performed at the work site and the work site parties involved

Criteria for evaluation and selection of other employers and self-employed persons:

When hiring other employers or self-employed persons, the employer must consider health and safety criteria in the selection process.

Evaluation and selection procedures with pass/fail criteria may be developed in consultation with the HSC or HS representative. Alternatively, a third party health and safety evaluation service or audit tool may be utilized.

The employer may request documentation such as:

- Health and safety program handbook or manual
- Health and safety policy
- Safe work policies and procedures
- WCB information (premium rate statement, clearance letter, employer report card)
- Certificate of Recognition (COR)
- Health and safety program audit results
- Hazard assessments
- HSC meeting minutes
- Safety meeting minutes, toolbox talks, or pre-job tailgate meeting records
- Worker and supervisor training and certification records
- Other, depending on the work being performed at the work site and the work site parties involved

This documentation may form part of a contractor pre-qualification process that the employer uses to ensure that other employers and self-employed persons equipped to address the health and safety requirements of the job.

Regular Monitoring

The procedures for monitoring other employers and self-employed persons at the work site could include:

- Defining regular intervals, depending on the type and nature of the work being done at the work site.
 - Note: If there is an HSC at the work site, the HSC must inspect the work site at least once before each quarterly meeting. This is the minimum requirement for inspections by the HSC; an employer can exceed that minimum.
- Scheduled formal inspections and occasional visual checks (scheduled and unscheduled).
- Assess the employer's performance against their own written procedures, work site specific health and safety policies, as well as the *OHS Act*, Regulations and Code
- Processes for dealing with non-compliances

Please note: These are suggested processes and should be modified to suit individual employer's needs depending on the type and duration of the work being done.

APPENDIX – Templates and samples

Worker Orientation Record – Template (Sample)

This is an example of a checklist you may wish to use when training new workers on health and safety in your workplace.

Worker's Name: _____

Date of Hire: _____

Date of Orientation: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Orientation Topics Covered?	Yes	No
Rights of workers:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to know • Right to participate • Right to refuse 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Company's health and safety policy		
Health and safety responsibilities for each work site party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and safety rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review of hazards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to report unsafe conditions and other health and safety concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to report incidents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workplace violence prevention plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harassment prevention plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency procedures		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the ERP • Location of fire exit(s) and fire extinguisher(s) 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
How to get first aid treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Written work procedures (list them here):

Other topics covered (list them here):

Comments:

APPENDIX – Templates and samples

Location of first aid kit(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WHMIS training (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location of Safety Data Sheets (SDSs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of personal protective equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Completion of this form does not indicate competency of workers. It may be used as a record that training has occurred.

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